

The Minot, White, Thoreau, Kettell families and the Colonial Inn (rev. March 13, 2024) by Ray Angelo

The Minot and White families, having deep roots in the early history of Concord, Massachusetts, and the Thoreau family, which became closely associated with the illustrious heritage of the town, are all connected to the three structures that became the Colonial Inn in the center of the town. The Kettell family connected the White and Thoreau families at the Inn property and at the Old Hill Burying Ground, both of these in Monument Square in the center of town. In the Old Hill Burying Ground a single tomb plaque bears just these three family names. In recent times the identity of the inhabitants in the chamber of the tomb below this plaque and the exact connection there was between them became lost. But it is possible to determine these with reasonable confidence and reveal how the connection of the four families and the existence of the Colonial Inn property were essential for Henry David Thoreau to end up in Concord.

The land on which the Colonial Inn is situated first belonged to Rev. Peter Bulkeley (1583-1659), one of the founders of the town of Concord in 1635. A stone marker with plaque in front of 32 Lowell Road near the Colonial Inn property denotes the former location of Rev. Bulkeley's house (according to Concord historian, Ruth R. Wheeler, somewhat misplaced but on Bulkeley land).

In September 1663 Rev. Bulkeley's widow, Grace (Chetwood) Bulkeley (1602-1669), sold to Captain Timothy Wheeler (ca. 1604-1687) and George Wheeler (1606-1687) for 400 pounds her deceased husband's land. It included the site of the future Colonial Inn. There is conflicting information about the relationship between Timothy and George. It appears not to be as close as is usually given (such as brother or uncle). Timothy held a three quarter interest and George held a one quarter interest in the property. After the purchase Timothy occupied the former house of Rev. Bulkeley and his wife.

After the death in July 1687 Captain Timothy Wheeler his land was left to his youngest child, Rebecca (1666-1734), and her husband, James Minot (1653-1735). James was educated at Harvard College. In Concord he was a teacher, physician, a justice of the peace, a captain in the militia, and a representative. For his family and his medical practice he had built on the land inherited from his father-in-law the first house that eventually became part of the Colonial Inn. It is

sometimes referred to as the East House due to its location northeasterly along Monument Street compared to the two later houses that all became part of the Colonial Inn. It was most likely built about 1688-1690 soon after the land was inherited.

In November 1716 James Minot conveyed to his son, Colonel James Minot (1694-1759), the East House. James was a military officer, justice of the peace, representative, and town selectman. After Colonel Minot died in 1759 all his real property was willed to his son, Ephraim Minot (1742-1794). Ephraim's son, farmer-hunter George Minott (1783-1861), later became much admired by Henry Thoreau. George's seamstress sister, Mary Minott, who lived with her brother, made clothing for Thoreau.

In January 1764 Ephraim Minot sold the East House and 20 acres of land to his cousin, Dr. Timothy Minot, Jr. (1726-1804), for 413 pounds, 6 shillings and 8 pence. It was during Dr. Minot's ownership that the Middle House was built on the southwest side of the East House sometime in the period 1770-1775. At the time of the battle at the Old North Bridge the Middle House was a one-story building used for storage of supplies. Also, for a short time afterwards wounded soldiers were treated by Dr. Minot in the East House. At that time Dr. Minot lived in the former Rev. Peter Bulkeley house.

An event occurred in Charlestown, MA on December 17, 1767 that was essential for the Thoreau family to end up in Concord. On that day William Kettell (1715-1767), a baker from a well-known family in that town, died leaving behind his wife and a dozen children ranging in age from 5 to 29 years of age. This family stayed in Charlestown until November 17, 1775. At that time Jonathan Puffer of Harvard, MA sold a parcel of land in Concord for 226 pounds 13 shillings and 4 pence to William Kittle [Kettell] (1739-1799) from Charlestown, son of the senior William, and also a baker, as was his father. The move of some of the Kettell family to Concord was prompted by the burning of Charlestown by the British soldiers.



Wright Tavern ca. 1900

In December 1775 the Wright Tavern in the center of Concord was purchased by Samuel Swan, also from Charlestown. George Tolman in 1901 reported that three of the Kettell brothers, William, John and Thomas, came to Concord with three of their sisters, these being the youngest surviving ones, Esther, Mary ("Polly") and Rebecca. The Kettells then rented the Wright Tavern from Samuel Swan to operate a bakery. Likely this opportunity arose by communication with Samuel Swan in advance. With three other Kettell brothers left behind in Charlestown to take over their father's

business, the oldest brother, William, with some of his siblings probably sought a new market in Concord, first buying some land there.

On November 11, 1778 in Concord Rev. Ezra Ripley performed the marriage of John White [later Deacon] (1749-1830) of Concord to Esther Kettell (ca. 1752-1804), daughter of the deceased Charlestown baker and deacon in that town. This marriage was important for the Thoreau family later to become connected to Concord. Without it there would not have been a convenient, spacious building (the East House) for Henry Thoreau's grandfather, John Thoreau, and his second wife Rebecca (now Deacon White's sister-in-law) to move to in Concord.

In 1780 John White rented the relatively new Middle House from Dr. Timothy Minot, Jr. and set up a variety store in it specializing in paints and oils. He lived with his new family in one end of the house.

The rental of the Wright Tavern for a bakery operated by the Kettells lasted until 1785 when Samuel Swan gave up the rental of Wright's Tavern as unprofitable. On June 23, 1788 a deed was signed in which the widowed mother of the Kettells, Ruth Kettell, and her children and their spouses at the time sold family property in Charlestown. The deed is useful in identifying all these family members, where they resided, what their occupations were and to whom they were married. The Concord Kettells at that time were: the widow Ruth, her sons William, John, and Thomas, all bakers, her daughter Esther, and her husband, John White, a trader. The name "Polly Kettell" was added before signing without giving her residence or status. But this can only be Mary Kettell who is known to have moved with her siblings to Concord and never married. Of note are Abigail and Rebecca Kettell listed as single women in Charlestown. Rebecca had returned there likely in 1780 when she reached 18 after first moving with some of her siblings to Concord about 1776.

In January 1789 Dr. Minot sold Deacon White the Middle House for 211 Spanish milled dollars. These were silver coins minted in Mexico and Latin America in use in the British colonies before and also after the Revolutionary War, "milled" to create ridged edges to discourage shaving, valued officially in 1792 equivalent to one U.S. dollar. On the same day Dr. Minot sold the East House to his son-in-law, Ammi White (1754-1820), a cabinet maker, and also a cousin of Deacon White. Ammi White was married to the doctor's daughter, Mary Minot (1759-1846). Ammi carried on his trade in a shop attached to the East House.

The 1790 U.S. Census shows William Kettell living with two males (brothers John and Thomas) and six females -- the mother Ruth with one or two of her three remaining unmarried daughters (Mary and Abigail) and perhaps three of four workers and/or boarders. All of the above-named Kettells died in Concord. In 1795 the Kettells resumed the bakery in the Wright Tavern with new owners. But this appears to have lasted only for two years.

The Kettell widow, Ruth, died in Concord on March 7, 1797 at age 82. She died three months before her youngest daughter, Rebecca, married Henry Thoreau's grandfather, John, but likely knew of a relationship developing. She appears to have lived most if not all of the last two decades of her life in Concord with three of her sons and four of her daughters, one of whom had married a respected Concord resident, Deacon John White, whose variety store was beginning to prosper. It is most probable that she was buried in a new tomb in the Old Hill Burying Ground. This was the older of the two cemeteries in the center of Concord at that time, in what is now Monument Square close to what is now the Colonial Inn. It appears that Deacon White, perhaps at the behest of his wife, Esther (Kettell) White, had the tomb made for themselves and for his wife's mother, Ruth, and his wife's Concord siblings. It is known that Deacon White is in this tomb. His wife and her

Concord siblings (other than her sister, Rebecca) are not known to be buried anywhere else. A plaque over one of the six chambers of the tomb now bears the names White, Kettell & Thoreau. Of all those known or most likely to be in the six chambers of the long tomb, each with a plaque, the widow Ruth Kettell has the earliest death date.



Henry Thoreau's grandfather, John Thoreau (April 21, 1754, St. Helier, Jersey – March 7, 1801, Concord, MA), originally named Jean, ended up in Boston in 1773. Becoming a privateer during the Revolutionary War, he then became a successful merchant in Boston. He married Jane ("Jennie") Burns (1754, Stirlingshire, Scotland – July 27, 1796, Boston, MA) on Aug. 19, 1781. They had ten children, eight of which survived beyond the age of two. When Jane died in 1796 John obviously needed another wife to help raise his remaining eight children. The oldest child was Elizabeth, only 14 years old at the time of her mother's death. How John Thoreau of Boston became connected to the Kettell family of Charlestown has not been accounted for. The answer almost certainly is that John Thoreau had a "trusty friend" (as described later in John's will) in the eminent merchant of Boston and Charlestown, Joseph Hurd (1752-1842). Joseph was married to one of the Kettell sisters, Hannah Kettell (1751-1825). When Joseph became aware of his friend John's need for another wife, there was an obvious choice – his pious, never-married sister-in-law, Rebecca Kettell (1762-1814). She was the daughter of William Kettell (1715-1767), a baker and a deacon in Charlestown. John and Rebecca were married by Rev. Ezra Ripley in Concord on June 6, 1797. Without Joseph Hurd there likely would not have been any Thoreau-Kettell connection or Thoreaus in Concord. Rebecca's sister, Esther, had married John White in 1788. Deacon White was becoming successful as a store owner, and owned property (the Middle House) in the center of Concord. His cousin, Ammi White, owned and lived in the East House.

On October 30, 1799 Ammi White sold the two-story East House to John Thoreau, Henry Thoreau's grandfather, for \$2,433.33, a significant sum in those days (see copy and transcript of deed further below). Perhaps John's wife, Rebecca, had persuaded her sister Esther (wife of Deacon John White) living in the Middle House, that she needed help in raising eight step-children. In 1799 Rebecca was 37 years old and had never before been married. She lost her only child with John the year before just a few hours after it was born. Ammi White and his wife Mary (Minot) White did not have more than five children at this time. After the sale Ammi and Mary moved to Westmoreland, NH where they spent the rest of their lives. Possibly an opportunity for a cabinet maker there or lack of business in Concord were factors. With the sale by Ammi and his wife Mary, who was a Minot, the long ownership by the Minots of Colonial Inn property had come to an end. The prosperity of Deacon John White at this time allowed him to add a second floor to the Middle

House about 1800. He then moved his family to the second floor from the part of the first floor where they had been.

The 1800 U.S. Census shows John Kettell as the only Kettell head-of-household living in Concord. His older brother, William, had died July 21, 1799. With John were one male aged 26-45, and a female 45 or older. The older female is likely his unmarried sister Mary (but whose age is misstated since she was just a few years shy of 45). The younger male is possibly a farmhand since the bakery was no longer operational, or maybe John's brother, Thomas, about to turn 46. The recently deceased, unmarried William was almost certainly buried with his mother Ruth in the White, Kettell and Thoreau tomb in the Old Hill Burying Ground. He is not known to be buried anywhere else.

The Thoreau family now had more room and family support close to them in Concord to help raise their family. Unfortunately, this bright prospect did not last. John Thoreau, grandfather of Henry Thoreau, died in Concord on March 7, 1801. He is not known to be buried anywhere else other than the White, Kettell & Thoreau tomb in the Old Hill Burying Ground. His widow, Rebecca, dutifully raised her eight step-children in the East House, aided by her eldest step-daughters, Elizabeth Thoreau (1782-1837), Jane Thoreau (1784-1864) and Mary Thoreau (1786-1811). Her sister next door, Esther White, likely assisted. Rebecca also had her strong faith and the counsel of Rev. Ezra Ripley of Concord, who had performed her marriage ceremony and that of her sister, Esther. Rev. Ripley was sufficiently impressed by Rebecca's dedication to duty and faith that he later wrote a brief biography of her for a religious journal.

Even before the senior John Thoreau's death the East House had been divided in its use. It had become a boarding house now run by Rebecca and her three eldest step-daughters. At his father's death Rebecca's oldest stepson, John (1787-1859) aged 14, future father of Henry Thoreau, began assisting in his step-uncle's store next door.

Deacon White's wife, Esther (Kettell) White, died in 1804. She almost certainly was entombed with her mother, Ruth Kettell, in the White, Kettell & Thoreau tomb. It was only 160 yards from where she had spent the last 24 years of her married life. She is not known to be buried anywhere else. Deacon White, known to be in that tomb, would certainly have arranged to be with his wife of 26 years when he died later.

In 1811 Daniel Shattuck (1790-1867) in partnership with Bela Hemmenway (1790-1816) bought the stock and goodwill of Deacon White's store in the Middle House. Deacon White continued an interest in the store and still lived in part of that building. Also, in this year Henry Thoreau's unmarried aunt, Mary Thoreau (1786-1811), died in Concord. She had continued to live in the East House with two of her unmarried sisters (Elizabeth and Sarah) and her stepmother Rebecca. She is most likely entombed with her father in the White, Kettell & Thoreau tomb. She is not known to be buried elsewhere.

Rebecca Thoreau (ca. 1762-1814), the second wife and widow of John Thoreau, Henry's grandfather, passed away in Concord in 1814 after 17 years of raising eight stepchildren. However, she did not choose to be entombed in Concord. She is known to be buried in Charlestown in the same cemetery as her father, William Kettell.

Some time about 1820 Deacon John White added the West House to the two existing buildings on the Colonial Inn site. He moved into it while Daniel Shattuck and his wife moved into the Middle House above the store.

In 1821 Deacon White sold the store business and both the Middle and West House to Daniel Shattuck, the survivor of the Shattuck - Hemmenway partnership. This ended the 32-year period of White ownership in the Colonial Inn properties.

John Kettell (1742-1823), one of the three Kettell brothers who moved to Concord in 1775 to operate a bakery in the Wright Tavern, died in Concord in 1823. He was married briefly and widowed with no children before his father died in 1767. He is not known to be buried outside of Concord and is most likely buried with his mother in the Old Hill Burying Ground in Concord.

In 1826 the surviving Kettells in Concord - Thomas, Abigail and Mary ("Polly") - sold for \$1,000 the Kettell farm in Concord (originally bought by their brother William in 1775). They sold it to their brother-in-law, Joseph Hurd (1752-1842) of Charlestown (married to their sister Hannah who died the previous year). They continued to live in Concord, all of them dying there.

Henry Thoreau's unmarried aunt, Sarah "Sally" Thoreau (1790-1829), died in Concord in 1829. She helped operate the boarding house in the East House for 18 years with her unmarried sisters, Elizabeth and Mary, and their stepmother, Rebecca Thoreau. She is most likely entombed in the Old Hill Burying Ground in Concord with her father and sisters, and not known to be buried elsewhere.

Deacon White died in 1830 in Concord and is known to be entombed in the Old Hill Burying Ground, almost certainly with his wife who preceded him in death, and with her mother and other members of the Kettell family who died in Concord.

The last of the Kettell brothers who moved to Concord in 1775 to run a bakery in the Wright Tavern, Thomas Kettell (1754-1833), died in Concord in 1833. Henry Thoreau (1817-1862) likely knew him or of him. Not known to be buried elsewhere, he is most likely entombed with his mother and siblings in the Old Hill Burying Ground, having spent 58 years in Concord.

During 1835-1837, while Henry Thoreau attended Harvard, his father, mother, brother and two sisters moved into the East House. It was still operated as a boarding house by his father's unmarried aunt, Elizabeth "Betsey" Thoreau (1782-1839).

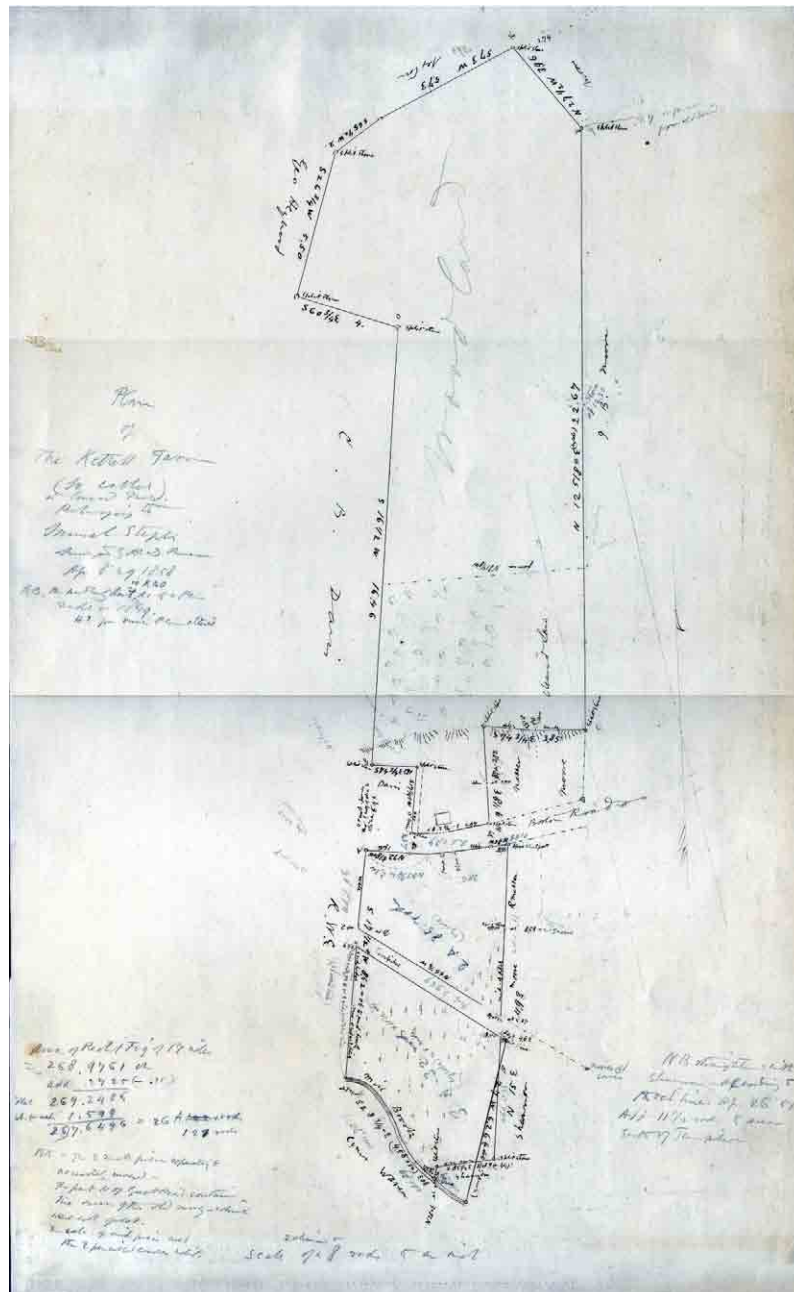
Elizabeth "Betsey" Thoreau died in Concord in 1839. In that year Daniel Shattuck bought the East House, completing his ownership of all three of the future Colonial Inn houses. This ended the 40-year Thoreau family connection to the East House. Elizabeth and her unmarried sisters, Mary and Sarah, are most likely entombed with their father in the Old Hill Burying Ground in Concord. She is not known to be buried elsewhere.

The remaining Kettells in Concord were the unmarried sisters, Abigail Kettell (1744-1842) and Mary "Polly" Kettell (1758-1849). They both died in Concord and are mostly likely entombed with their mother Ruth, three unmarried brothers, William, John and Thomas, and sister, Esther White, all not known to be buried elsewhere.

Henry Thoreau in his Journal on November 9, 1850 notes "the old Kettell place ... where twenty-five years ago I played horse in the paths of a thick wood ..." In 1850 the Kettell farm belonged to Isaac Watts (ca. 1793-1860) and his son, Horatio Cogswell Watts (1826-1899). They had purchased it for \$1,200 in 1849 from William Hurd, the son of deceased Joseph Hurd. It is likely that Joseph Hurd (and then his son) had allowed the remaining three Concord Kettells, his in-laws, to continue living on the farm after he bought the farm from them in 1826. The death of the last of

them, Mary ("Polly") Kettell, in 1849 likely prompted this sale of the farm to the Watts father and son in that year. The Watts father and son only held the Kettell farm until 1851. It passed through one more set of hands before ending up in 1857 with Samuel Staples (1812-1895), Thoreau's jailer and man of many other roles, including real estate developer.

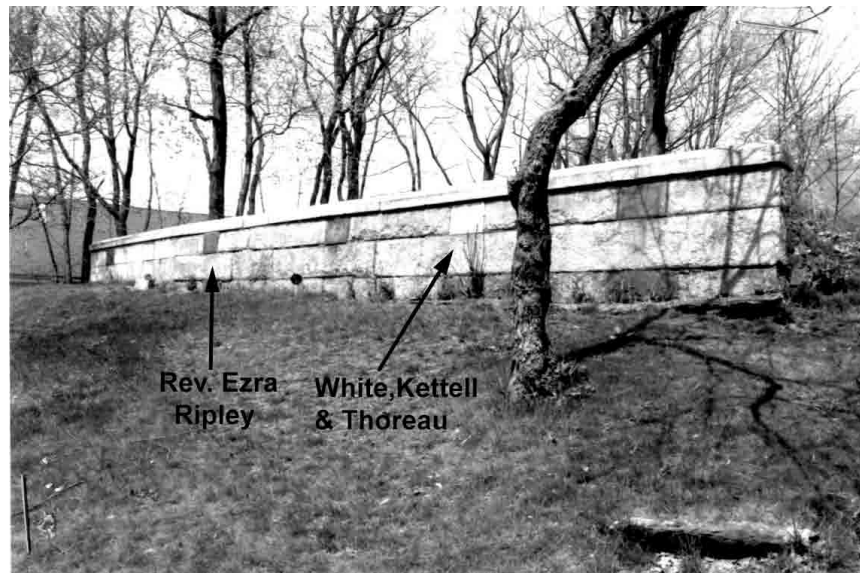
Henry Thoreau surveyed the Kettell farm for Samuel Staples in 1858. The survey shows that it straddled both the Lexington Road and the Cambridge Turnpike abutting the east side of the Ralph Waldo Emerson property, and continued up the hill/ridge north of Lexington Road to a woodland that extended more than 500 yards north of the Kettell house (that was on the north side of Lexington Road). The house apparently no longer exists. This author was astonished to realize that the eight years he lived in Concord was right on the Kettell land (Chestnut St.)!



Thoreau survey of Kettell farm in April 1858 for Samuel Staples (original in Concord Free Public Library and on their web site)

It is fitting that there is a single White, Kettell and Thoreau tomb in the Old Hill Burying Ground in Concord since these families were so closely linked in Concord for half a century. It is also appropriate for this tomb to be in Monument Square where the Colonial Inn houses and Wright Tavern are situated which played such significant roles in bringing these families together, particularly the Colonial Inn property where much of their interaction occurred. The Minot family played a pivotal role in setting the table for these families to converge. Several key events noted above were necessary for the Thoreaus to end up in Concord. Without these there likely would never have been a classic book inspired by Walden Pond. Henry and his brother and sisters might have spent the greater portion of their youth in Boston with uncertain consequences for the future writer, David Henry Thoreau, if a writer at all.

Lastly, considering the number and significance of the members of these three notable Concord families entombed in the Old Hill Burying Ground, with high probability – two Whites, six Kettells and four Thoreaus, the tomb is due more respect and attention than it has likely received in two centuries. Seemingly by fate, Rev. Ezra Ripley, who joined the Whites and Kettells, and who joined the Thoreaus and Kettells, is in the same tomb two chambers away.



Tomb in Old Hill Burying Ground, Concord, MA

The Minot, White, Kettell and Thoreau families (* - known or most likely in the tomb):

Minot/Minott:

James Minot (Sept. 14, 1653, Dorchester, MA – Sept. 20, 1735, Concord, MA)
 married Rebecca Wheeler (Feb. 25, 1666, Concord, MA – Sept. 22, 1734, Concord, MA)
 [Rebecca inherited the Colonial Inn land from her father, Captain Timothy Wheeler
 (ca. 1604-1687); James built the East House]

Colonel James Minott (Oct. 16, 1694, Concord, MA – Feb. 6, 1759, Concord, MA), son of James
 and Rebecca, married on Oct. 9, 1735 in Brookfield, MA his second wife, Elizabeth (Wilder)
 Merrick (1705 MA – Sept. 13, 1779, Littleton, MA), her second marriage
 [Colonel James received the East House in 1716 as a gift from his father and the rest of the
 property later by inheritance]

Ephraim Minot (June 17, 1742, Essex, MA – Sept. 14, 1794, Concord, MA) son of James and Elizabeth, married in Concord on Sept. 24, 1764 Abigail Prescott (June 12, 1747, Concord, MA – Feb. 17, 1825, Concord, MA)

[Inherited the Colonial Inn land and East House from his father; his son George Minott and daughter Mary Minott were well-known to Henry Thoreau]

Dr. Timothy Minot, Jr. (Apr. 8, 1726, Concord, MA – Aug. 1, 1804, Concord, MA) son of Timothy Minot (1692-1778), son James Minot (1653-1735), thus a cousin of Ephraim Minot [bought the East House and 20 acres of land from his cousin Ephraim Minott, built the Middle House and later sold it to Deacon John White (1749-1830) and on the same day sold the East House to his son-in-law Ammi White (1754-1820), a cousin of Deacon White]

Mary Minot (May 20, 1759, Concord, MA – Oct. 15, 1846, Cheshire, NH), daughter of Dr. Timothy Minot, Jr. (1726-1804) and Mary Martin (1731, Concord, MA – Dec. 23, 1801, Concord, MA)

[married Ammi White (1754-1820) on Aug. 12, 1788 in Concord]

White:

Deacon John White* (Aug. 23, 1749, Acton, MA – Jan. 9, 1830, Concord, MA) the son of Mark White (1716-1798), the son of Ensign Mark White (1689-1758), married Esther Kettell (ca. 1752, Charlestown, MA – July 31, 1804, Concord, MA) on Nov. 11, 1788 in Concord by Rev. Ezra Ripley

[bought the Middle House of the Colonial Inn property, added the second floor to it and had the West House built; helped train in his Middle House store the young John Thoreau, (1787-1858), father of Henry Thoreau; almost certainly paid for the White, Kettell & Thoreau tomb]

Ammi White (Oct. 18, 1754, Groton, MA – Feb. 28, 1820, Westmoreland, NH) son of Thomas White, Sr. (1722-1795) son of Ensign Mark White (1689-1758) married Mary Minot (1759-1846)

[a cabinetmaker, cousin of Deacon John White (1749-1830); bought the East House from his father-in-law, Dr. Timothy Minot, Jr. (1726-1804) and later sold it John Thoreau (1754-1801), grandfather of Henry Thoreau]

Kettell:

Ruth Stimpson Kettell* (1717, Charlestown, MA – March 7, 1797, Concord, MA) married William Kettell (Apr. 10, 1715, Charlestown, MA – Dec. 17, 1767, Charlestown, MA) on March 24, 1837 in Charlestown

[widow of a baker; moved to Concord with six of her unmarried children after the British burned Charlestown]

William Kettell* (June 8, 1739 Boston, MA – July 21, 1799, Concord, MA)

[unmarried son of Ruth Kettell (1717-1797) and William Kettell (1715-1767); purchased land in Concord for himself, his mother and siblings to live, located on the east side of what later became Ralph W. Emerson's residence; rented the Wright Tavern where he and his siblings operated a bakery]

John Kettell* (Dec. 8, 1742, Charlestown, MA – May 1823, Concord, MA) married Abigail Kidder

(Jan. 10, 1741, Charlestown, MA – Feb. 10, 1767, Charlestown, MA) on Feb. 7, 1765 in Charlestown

[son of Ruth Kettell (1717-1797) and William Kettell (1715-1767); a widower with no children at the time he and some of his siblings moved to Concord to operate a bakery; after the death of his older brother he became the head of the Kettell family in Concord; listed as head of household in the 1800, 1810 and 1820 U.S. censuses]

Abigail Kettell* (August 1744, Charlestown, MA – Dec. 1842, Concord, MA)

[daughter of Ruth Kettell (1717-1797) and William Kettell (1715-1767); never married; did not move originally with some of her siblings to Concord; listed in a 1788 deed as being in Charlestown; moved to Concord by 1826 since she is listed as residing there in a deed in of that year]

Esther Kettell* (ca. 1752, Charlestown, MA – July 31, 1804, Concord, MA) on Nov. 11, 1788 in Concord, MA married by Rev. Ezra Ripley to John White (1749-1830)

[daughter of Ruth Kettell (1717-1797) and William Kettell (1715-1767); moved to Concord with her mother and some of her siblings to operate a bakery; the only Kettell sister to marry a Concord resident; had two children with him]

Thomas Kettell* (June 16, 1754, Boston, MA – March 18, 1833, Concord, MA)

[son of Ruth Kettell (1717-1797) and William Kettell (1715-1767); never married; moved to Concord with his mother and some of his siblings to operate a bakery; the last Kettell brother in Concord; sold the Kettel land in Concord to a brother-in-law; apparently was allowed to continue living on the Kettell property in Concord with his two surviving sisters, Abigail and Mary ("Polly") Kettell]

Mary ("Polly") Kettell* (Aug. 27, 1858, Boston, MA – Oct 4, 1849, Concord, MA)

[daughter of Ruth Kettell (1717-1797) and William Kettell (1715-1767); never married; moved to Concord with her mother and some of her siblings to operate a bakery; she was the last Kettell to survive in Concord]

Rebecca Kettell (1762, Charlestown, MA – April 22, 1814, Concord, MA) married on June 6, 1797 in Concord, MA by Rev. Ezra Ripley to John Thoreau (1754-1801), grandfather of Henry D. Thoreau

[the youngest of all the Kettell children of Ruth and William Kettell; moved to Concord with her mother and some of her siblings to operate a bakery; she was the second wife of John Thoreau; he was her only husband; no children by him other than one that lived less than a day; after her husband's premature death she raised in the East House his eight children, including John Thoreau (1787-1859), Henry D. Thoreau's father; operated with the East House as a boarding house with the help of her older step-children]

Thoreau:

John Thoreau* (April 21, 1754, St. Helier, Jersey – March 7, 1801, Concord, MA), grandfather of Henry D. Thoreau, married his second wife, Rebecca Kettell (1762-1814) on June 6, 1797 in Concord by Rev. Ezra Ripley

[successful merchant in Boston, MA after migration to Massachusetts colony; remarried soon after death of his first wife Jane ("Jennie") Burns (1754-1796); no children by Rebecca that survived more than a day, but had eight surviving children by Jane at time of his remarriage; bought East House from Ammi White (1754-1820)]

Elizabeth "Betsey" Orrock Thoreau* (May 19, 1782, Boston, MA – Nov. 15, 1839, Concord, MA), oldest daughter of John Thoreau (1754-1801) and Jane Burns (1754-1796), was oldest aunt of Henry D. Thoreau

[never married; helped her stepmother Rebecca Kettell Thoreau (1762-1814) operate East House as a boarding house, continuing with two of her sisters after death of their stepmother; the last Thoreau to occupy and own the East House]

Jane Thoreau (Dec. 25, 1784, Boston, MA – Aug. 22, 1864, Bangor, ME), daughter of John Thoreau (1754-1801) and Jane Burns (1754-1796), was an aunt of Henry D. Thoreau
[never married; moved with her sister Maria Thoreau (1794-1881) out of the East House and lived together in various places ending up in Bangor, ME]

Mary Thoreau* (Feb. 24, 1786, Boston, MA – July 24, 1811, Concord, MA), daughter of John Thoreau (1754-1801) and Jane Burns (1754-1796), was an aunt of Henry D. Thoreau
[never married; helped run the family boarding house in the East House]

John Thoreau (Oct. 8, 1787, Boston, MA – Feb. 3, 1859, Concord, MA), son of John Thoreau (1754-1801) and Jane Burns (1754-1796), married Cynthia Dunbar (1787-1872) on Apr. 23, 1812 in Concord, MA, was father of Henry D. Thoreau and is buried with him in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery
[as a boy worked next door in the store of his step-uncle, Deacon John White (1749-1830) in the Middle House; later he and his family lived briefly in the East House operated by his sisters as a boarding house]

Nancy Thoreau (May 1, 1789, Boston, MA – Mar. 5, 1815, Bangor, ME), daughter of John Thoreau (1754-1801) and Jane Burns (1754-1796), married Caleb Calender Billings (1788-1833) on June 20, 1810 in Boston, was an aunt of Henry D. Thoreau
[helped run the family boarding house in the East House before her marriage]

Sarah "Sally" Thoreau* (Oct. 30, 1790, Boston, MA – Aug. 21, 1829, Concord, MA), daughter of John Thoreau (1754-1801) and Jane Burns (1754-1796), was an aunt of Henry D. Thoreau
[never married; helped her stepmother Rebecca Kettell Thoreau (1762-1814) operate East House as a boarding house, continuing with a couple of her sisters after death of stepmother]

Maria Thoreau (June 16, 1794, Boston, MA – Dec. 8, 1881, Bangor, ME), daughter of John Thoreau (1754-1801) and Jane Burns (1754-1796), was an aunt of Henry D. Thoreau
[never married; moved with her sister Jane Thoreau (1794-1881) out of the East House and lived together in various places ending up in Bangor, ME; the last surviving child of her parents]

David Thoreau (June 9, 1796, Boston, MA – Aug. 28, 1817, Boston, MA), son of John Thoreau (1754-1801) and Jane Burns (1754-1796), was an uncle of Henry D. Thoreau
[never married; grew up mostly in the East House; died six weeks after the birth of Henry D. Thoreau, who was named after this uncle]

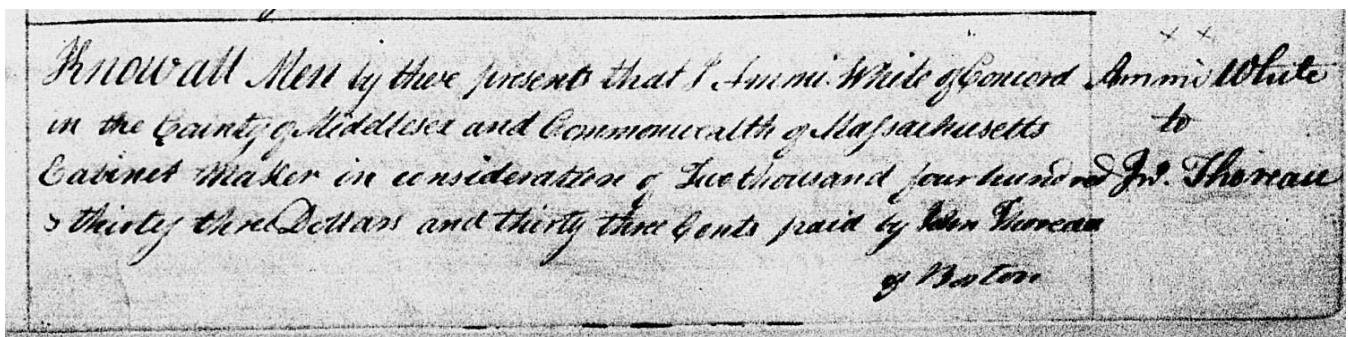
Transcript and image of deed for purchase of the East House by John Thoreau (1754-1801) from Ammi White (1754-1820) on Oct. 30, 1799; Middlesex Co. MA deed Book 133 Page 263; image further below:

Know all Men by these present that I Ammi White of Concord in the County of Middlesex and Commonwealth of Massachusetts Cabinet maker in consideration of Two thousand four hundred & thirty three Dollars and thirty three Cents paid by John Thoreau of Boston in the County of Suffolk & Commonwealth aforesaid Merchant the receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge, do hereby give grant sell and convey unto the said John Thoreau, his Heirs & Assigns a certain piece or tract of Land situate lying & being in the middle of the Town of Concord aforesaid with the dwelling house and Joiner Shop thereon standing bounded as follows viz Beginning at the Southerly corner of the premises at the distance of eighteen inches from the Front of the dwelling house at a stake by common land thence runing[sic] North ten degrees West seven rods & four & an half feet still on land of Deacon White from thence runing[sic] East twelve degrees North four rods & an half to a stake on land of D^r Timothy Minot from thence turning & runing[sic] South Eighteen degrees East Ninety five feet, coming to the distance of sixteen feet from the Northerly side of said Joiners shop, thence runing[sic] Easterly thirty feet to a stake and stones thence runing[sic] Southerly sixteen feet to a stake and stones near said Shop thence runing[sic] Northerly eight feet to the Corner of said Shop, thence Southeasterly on land of D^r Minot to the stone Wall on the County road [Monument St.] leading to the old North Bridge thence westerly to the Easterly Corner of said dwelling house at the distance of eighteen inches, thence more Westerly in a parallel line with the Front of said house to the bounds first mentioned, Said Thoreau to have Liberty to go round the Northeasterly corner of said Shop for repairing the same from time to time & at all times, Also a pew in the lower floor of the Meeting House in said Concord being N[umber] Forty three

To have and to hold the aforesaid Premises to the said John Thoreau Heirs and Assigns to his and their use and Behoof forever And I do covenant with said John Thoreau his Heirs and Assigns that I lawfully seized in Fee of the aforegranted Premises that they are Free of all incumbrances that I have good right to sell and convey the same to John Thoreau his Heirs & Assigns, and that I will warrant and defend the same Premises to the said John Thoreau his Heirs and Assigns forever against the lawful claims and demands of all Persons In Witness whereof I the said Ammi White together with Mary my Wife in token of the relinquishment of her right of Dower in the Premises have hereunto to set our hands and seals this thirtieth Day of October in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety nine Ammi White and seal Mary White and seal Signed and delivered in presence of us Amos Hagget Abiel Heywood Middlesex Js Concord October 30th 1799 Then the above named Ammi White personally appeared acknowledged the above Instrument to be his free act and Deed before me Abiel Heywood Just of Peace –

Middlesex Js Cambridge 31st October Received and Entered

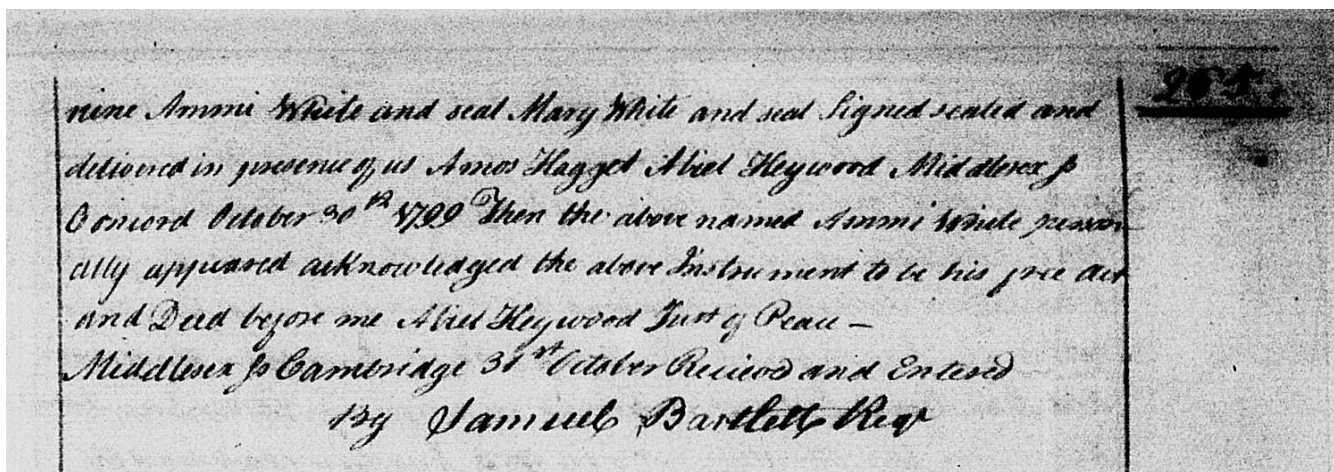
By Samuel Bartlett Reg^s



Know all Men by these presents that I Ammi White of Concord
in the County of Middlesex and Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Cabinet maker in consideration of Two thousand four hundred & thirty three
Dollars and thirty three Cents paid by John Thoreau
of Boston

Ammi White
to
John Thoreau

in the County of Suffolk & Commonwealth aforesaid Merchant
 the receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge, do hereby give grant
 sell and convey unto the said John Thoreau, his Heirs & Assigns a
 certain piece or tract of Land situate lying & being in the mid-
 dle of the Town of Concord aforesaid with the dwelling house
 and Joiners Shop thereon standing bounded as follows viz Beginning
 at the Southerly corner of the premises at the distance of eighteen
 Inches from the Front of the dwelling house at a stake by com-
 mon land thence running North twenty one degrees West two rods
 & about an half on land of Deacon John White to a stake from
 thence running North ten degrees West seven rods & four an half
 feet still on land of Deacon White from thence running East under
 degrees North four rods & an half to a stake on land of D^r Timothy
 Minot from thence turning & running South Eighteen degrees East
 Ninety five feet, coming to the distance of sixteen feet from the
 Northerly side of said Joiners shop, thence running Easterly
 thirty feet to a stake and stones thence running Southerly sixteen
 feet to a stake and stones near said Shop thence running
 Northerly eight feet to the Corner of said Shop, thence South
 easterly on land of D^r Minot to the stone Wall on the County
 road leading to the old North Bridge thence Westerly to the ^{Easterly} Corner
 of said dwelling house at the distance of eighteen inches, thence
 more Westerly in a parallel line with the Front of said house to
 the bounds first mentioned, Said Thoreau to have Liberty to go
 round the Northeastly corner of said Shop for repairing the
 same from time to time & at all times, Also a piece in the lower plot
 of the Meeting House in said Concord being N^o Forty three
 To HAVE AND to hold the aforesaid Premises to the said John
 Thoreau His and Assigns to his and their use and behoof forever
 And I do covenant with the said John Thoreau his Heirs and Assigns
 that I lawfully seized in Fee of the aforesaid Premises that they
 are Free of all incumbrances that I have good right to sell and convey
 the same to the said John Thoreau his Heirs & Assigns, And that I
 will warrant and defend the same Premises to the said John
 Thoreau his Heirs and Assigns forever against the lawfull claim
 and demands of all Persons In Witness whereof I the said Annis
 White together with Mary my Wife in token of the relinquish-
 ment of her right of Dower in the Premises have hereunto
 set ~~my~~ hand and seals this thirtieth Day of October in the
 Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and Ninety
 nine



Sources and References (chronological order)

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FamilySearch web site. A good place for birth, marriage, and death dates and places, sometimes with additional information. Usually sources are given for the information. Deeds of Middlesex County, Massachusetts dating back to colonial times can also be found here.
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/>

Thanks to Robert A. Gross and Tish Hopkins for answering questions and/or pointing to some references useful to this work.